

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY

EMBASSY PARIS 2623

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

AFSC ANDREWS AFB

ASD WPAFB OH/YP

USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: MASS DA

SUBJ: LEIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER: REACTION TO NEW

SWEDISH OFFER

REF: COPENHAGEN 1590

SUMMARY: THE LEFT WING PRESS AND POLITICAL CIRCLES
OPPOSING ANY DANISH AIRCRAFT PURCHASE CONTINUE TO EXPLOIT
THE LATEST SWEDISH OFFER, URGING DELAY IN PARLIAMENTARY
ACTION ON F-16 PURCHASE. THE GOVERNMENT REMAINS FIRM,
HOWEVER, AND THERE ARE GROWING INDICATIONS THAT THE
ENABLING RESOLUTION WILL PASS ON SCHEDULE. END SUMMARY.

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1) THE LAST-MINUTE SWEDISH OFFER HAS GIVEN THOSE WHO OPPOSE PURCHASE OF ANY PLANE, AND OPPONENTS OF THE F-16 PURCHASE IN PARTICULAR, A BOOST IN THEIR EFFORTS TO PRESSURE THE GOVERNMENT INTO A DELAY OR A RECONSIDERATION OF ITS DECISION TO BUY THE F-16. THE LEFT WING PRESS HAS DRUMMED UP ALL THE OLD ARGUMENTS, STRESSING PARTICULARLY THE LACK OF AN INFLATION-PROOF PRICE FOR THE F-16. EVEN AKTUELT, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT'S OFFICIAL MOUTHPIECE, EDITORIALIZED THAT THE "SWEIDSH OFFER WAS BOTH SURPRISING AND INTERESTING". IT INITMATED THAT THE NEW OFFER PROVED THE EXISTENCE OF A "BUYER'S MARKET", WHICH MIGHT BE EXPLOITED BY PLAYING OFF ONE PLANE PRODUCER AGAINST ANOTHER.

2) THE GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, REMAINED FIRM. AFTER A CABINET MEETING LAST NIGHT (JUNE 3), PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN STATED THAT THE SWEDISH OFFER WAS OF LITTLE INTEREST SINCE THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO BUY THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN MADE. THE SOCIAL DEOMOCRATIC PARTY GROUP, WHICH WOULD BE THE FIRST BODY TO REFLECT A SERIOUS WEAKENDING OF RESOLVE, ALSO REMAINED SOLIDLY BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT'S DEICSION IN FAVOR OF THE F-16. ALTHOUGH THE HANDFUL OF OPPONENTS WITHIN THE GROUP DEMANDED A RECONSIDERATION OF THE PARTY'S DECISION THE MAJORITY CUT OFF DEBATE WITH REFERENCE TO THE ONGOING CONSIDERATION IN THE PARLIAMENTARY DEFENSE COMMITTEE.

3) IN THAT COMMITTEE'SMEETING JUNE 3, DEFENSE MINISTER ORLA MOLLER WAS PRESENTED WITH A LONG LIST OF SPECIFIC QUESTIONS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS OPPOSED TO THE PURCHASE. AMONG THESE WAS THE QUESTION WHETHER NATO OR THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAD EXERTED PRESSURE FOR THE AIRCRAFT PURCHASE, FOR EXAMPLE, BY RAISING THE ISSUE OF SAS CAPACITY OVER THE ATLANTIC. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN ARNE CHRISTIANSEN STILL AIMS AT HAVING THE FINAL REPORT READY FOR SUBMITTAL TO PARLIAMENT BY FRIDAY, JUNE 6.

4) IN ITS OVERALL EFFECT,THE LAST-MINUTE PRESENTATION OF THE SWEDISH OFFER APPEARS TO HAVE ANTAGONIZED BOTH PROPONENTS OF THE F-16 PURCHASE AND ITS DIVERSE GROUPS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF OPPONEMS. MANY OF THE LATTER ADMIT TO FEELING THAT THE SWEDES WERE NOT PLAYING FAIR. THIS REACTION HAS APPARENTLY THROWN THE SWEDISH PRINCIPALS BEHIND THE OFFER ON THE DEFENSIVE. SWEDISH DEFENSE MINISTER ERIC HOLMQVIST IS REPORTED IN THE PRESS AS STATING THAT THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT HAD NOT INFLUENCED THE DRASTIC PRICE REDUCTION FOR THE VIGGEN AND A SAAB-SCANIA SPOKESMAN REPORTEDLY COMMENTED THAT THE COMPANY'S OFFER HAD BEEN

SUBMITTED FOR THE EVENTUALITY THAT BELGIUM SHOULD SAY
NO TO THE F-16.
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